

Address delivered by Hon. John E. Fogarty, MC at the 45th Annual Convention of the R. I. State Branch of the American Federation of Labor, at the Narragansett Hotel, Providence, R. I. and broadcast over Station WEAN, Sunday, October 7, 1945.

My Friends:

I want to talk to you about an expression which is making the rounds whenever the talk turns to the subject of Industrial Relations. It is "Working together for the Common Good". You have read it, I know - you have heard it from the lips of public speakers and radio commentators. It has been presented as the cure for all our ills - it has been described as the answer to our present day problem of industrial unrest.

While it might appear to some to be overplayed - I want to affirm to you, my friends, that I believe it is the only way out for all Americans. Working together for the Common Good will set us on a path towards a richer and happier life - toward the enjoyment by all of the many great benefits the future holds in store.

It would be folly for me to attempt to skirt the important issue of the hour. It would be cowardly for me to stand here and preach platitudes when I know, and you know, the screaming thought of the moment, is how in God's name are we going to win for ourselves and our children the peace and freedom and prosperity for which we hunger.

Daily the press carries denunciations of American Labor Unions for their dastardly activities in scuttling reconversion. Our own newspaper denounces even the right to strike and pleads for the repeal of the Smith-Connally Act - the legislation for which it stumped so mightily when it thought trade unions were about to be hung, drawn and quartered.

No where in the pages of this paper will you find one column, one paragraph, one word which would intimate that in the arena of economic conflict perhaps the man at the machine has a cause which should be heard.

Never a whisper for the man and woman who made the tools of war

- and who still must provide meat and bread from a steadily dwindling pay-envelope. Sarcastically, he is pushed aside. His losses are his own, the editor enchants, and his losses are of far less consequence than the infinitely greater losses that industry faces.

That is the bond of cooperation we have served up to us by those who pompously pretend a paternal interest in our future.

Working together for the Common Good calls for decency in the treatment of the problems of all of us. It is unjust to refer deliberately to the interests of the working man as opposed to the interests of the Nation as a whole. Are not the working men and women of the country the parents who gave the men who fought and died - the men whose blood has saturated the beaches of Europe and Asia. The sacrifices of these heroes will never be forgotten. Yet these great economic apostles who would put father against son - and family against family - in their mad effort to paint Labor as an enemy of the Veteran - they forget - or they never knew - that the anguish and heartache borne by the mother at home - was often a far greater pain than that suffered by the wounded soldier on the battlefield. And that mother, in her intense happiness at the return of her soldier son, is not permitted to forget for a moment the daily struggle to make both ends meet.

The unrest which exists throughout the Country today should not be, were it not for those who see in the transition from war to peace a glowing opportunity to cement their personal interests - even though it be at the sacrifice of the Common Good.

Why is there unrest? Because working men and women are chisellers, some say. The man who is raising a family - paying rent, buying clothes, and fighting prices, in order to keep food in the ice-box - he is branded a scoundrel and a humbug because he seeks work at a trade which he has spent a life-time in learning. A man who has a family to feed cannot wax enthusiastic



over a job at 40 cents an hour. Nor can a skilled mechanic give humble thanks for a caretaker's job.

Why has the present unrest been permitted to continue - slowing the flood of production to a mere trickle at a time when the world thirsts for the products of our factories? It continues because there are still employers who sit like God on an Olympus of profits, growing angry as they see far below them on a plane of mechanized monotony, the distant employees, like rebellious children who refuse to offer sacrifice.

They'll say I'm a demagogue for talking thus - but look at the record.

My office was swamped with mail from industrialists who bitterly condemned the suggestion that the Federal Government should provide assistance by way of Unemployment Compensation during the transition period. Why did they protest? You know - as well as the press knows - if we provide a family man with \$25.00 a week while he is out of work - through no fault of his own - then industrialists will be compelled to pay him a decent living wage for his gainful toil.

But do they honestly declare that to be the reason for their blind opposition? Certainly not! They profess a paternal interest in us. They declare we are not worthy of such consideration. The working men and women of America - the very men and women who contributed so much toward compiling the greatest production record in history - who gave their sons to America - who bought bonds - who paid taxes - who went without in order to feed our Allies - and who are even yet asked to give more - these men and women are branded sluggards and dolts - they would rather live in the gutter like dogs on twenty-five dollars a week - than live in the sun like men on a decent, living wage - gained from honest labor.

They are told their Government must not help them - for thus lies the road to Dictatorship. When they turn to their government for con-

sideration - the Government which organized and regimented their lives during the war - they are met with a sneer and told to go fight the battle of economic rivalry on whatever crumbs they can garner - their government refused to entertain their plea.

Some profess this is as it should be. Working men should be denied a hearing. They should be dragooned into whatever occupation their overseers shall determine. This in America after a war which was fought - we believed - to provide for all peoples a new conception - a new understanding - of the brotherhood of man.

And what about the other side of the picture? How did the Federal Government treat the problems of Industry? You remember this when you read in the daily paper the bitter denunciations of a Federal Government that would help the working man. When you are told that any form of assistance from the Federal Government means the end of democracy and the fragooning of all men in our society - you recall that it was not so many years ago that industry in this country held your government by the throat and wrung from it every last ounce of assistance that could be had before it was willing to even discuss cooperation in the manufacture of the needed tools for defense.

Industry has had its profits during the war. The record discloses that never in history has there been a more profitable period than that through which we have just passed. Industrial profits, even after taxes, have been the highest of all time. And now taxes are to be reduced in order to add substantially to the tax-credit allowed industry out of war contracts - an allowance to pay the costs of reconversion.

But was that sufficient assistance from government - not by a jug-full.

In June of 1944 the Federal Government tendered more substantial help to private industry - to tide over the perils to be faced in the days of reconversion. The Federal Government insured adequate compensation in the



termination of war contracts - it included expenses for removing and storing materials - profits were allowed on uncompleted portions of war contracts, interim financing was provided for plus interest on all settlement claims.

This for industry - eminently fair - and does not threaten democracy - despite the fact that it provides handouts from the Federal Government. But let someone advocate something decent for the man who labors and is out of a job through war contract terminations - and all the skies go blood red - democracy shakes to her very foundations and the Republic staggers toward utter ruin and destruction.

Yes, cooperation for the Common Good is what is needed. Not, what we have today - on the one hand excuses and justifications for economic royalists who are just as reactionary today as they were in 1929 when their greed brought their house of cards tumbling around their ears - and on the other hand nothing but ridicule and vilification for the member of a union who seeks to fight the battle for survival with no weapon in his arsenal except the right to strike. That weapon he is bluntly told, he must not use - because it is more important that we have luxuries - than bread and milk.

The American people know what it wants. Some call it peace of mind. Some call it by various names. Some may be hard pressed to put their tongue to any single definition. But down in your heart of hearts you know that the backbone of what we call the American way of life - is the American home. That little piece of this earth in which is concentrated all the hopes and dreams of the American man and woman.

There are just two things that go to make that home a success - a genuine respect for God - and economic security. Destroy either and you destroy the American home. Then you can really begin to prepare for the destruction of our society which has been promised every time Labor unions have taken up the cudgels to fight for that security.

Cooperation for the Common Good is more than desirable - it is

vital. Those who would serve their country well - can be about the job by putting an end to their generation of class hatred and bigotry - and fostering in its place a genuine feeling of working together to gain the common goal.

During recent years Labor Unions have come of age. They have grown to maturity and they will not be cast into the discard. They are a factor in American Industrial life and intelligent manufacturers and business men recognize that fact.

I have always insisted that with every right gained by Labor there has been a corresponding responsibility. I still maintain that position. I insist that Labor unions must shoulder the responsibilities that go with their newly won position. They must make a genuine contribution to the ordering of American life if they are to survive. But I also maintain - you can't hold a man against the wall by the throat - and lecture to him about his duties to society.

American Industry must recognize that IT also has responsibilities to society as well as the rights which it so loudly declaims at every opportunity. American Industry has a social responsibility to the men who produce the products from which profits are derived - and to the merchants and business men who must depend on that producer for their livelihood. The piling up of huge profits is no longer the be-all and end-all of industrial operations.

Industry stands to gain most, in the long run, by full-employment at decent wages. Full-employment will produce an expanding economy wherein all can enjoy the outpourings of our tremendous industrial empire.

Let those who preach the cause of Industry - who seek for Industry the power of life and death over our economy, think for a moment on the swinging pendulum to which they like to refer. Let them look at events throughout the world; look at the day to day picture of developments at home. Those who plead for the protection of private enterprise - and let me say Labor Unions are well

in the forefront among those who want private enterprise to thrive and flourish - those who wish to see American industry function free from all controls save those which are dictated by an honest conscience - they can best serve their cause by insisting that industry shoulder its responsibilities and begin to pull its part of the load in this Democracy of ours.

If industry will do that - then Industry in America shall have the powerful voice in the shaping of its own destiny. American Industry can lead us to even greater heights than we have yet been able to attain.

But, if Industry, in its blind selfishness, shall refuse to recognize its proper obligations to society - then other hands will seize the reins - others will determine the destiny of private enterprise.

The working men and women of America seek economic security. Their program is clear. It is positive. Members of Labor Unions cannot enjoy that security alone - It must - It shall - benefit all.

Industry has the opportunity to cooperate for the Common Good. Its cooperation will guarantee its survival. - -

It is Cooperation - - or Chaos!